
Iowa Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Juvenile Justice Update

ISSUE

This document reviews the final report submitted to the Juvenile Justice System Study Committee by the Committee's consultant, and the 1993 Update to the Iowa Juvenile Justice Plan.

AFFECTED AGENCIES

The Department of Human Services (DHS)

The Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning of the Department of Human Rights

The Judicial Department

CODE AUTHORITY

House File 2452 (the Juvenile Justice Bill) approved by the 1992 General Assembly, requested that the Legislative Council negotiate a contract with the Annie E. Casey Foundation for a comprehensive study of services for juveniles involved in delinquency proceedings, with a report to the General Assembly no later than March 1, 1993.

House File 2480 (the Child Welfare Statutory Bill) approved by the 1992 General Assembly, requires the General Assembly to annually establish statewide targets for the number of group foster care placements paid by the State. The Bill also established regional planning groups to implement these placement targets, and limits judicial authority to order group foster care placements if the placement is not in accord with the plan for the region.

Section 601K.9, Code of Iowa establishes the Iowa Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning Advisory Council (CJJJAC). The Iowa Juvenile Justice Advisory Council is established pursuant to federal mandates of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.

BACKGROUND

The costs of providing foster care services in Iowa have increased substantially in the last 5 years. For FY 1993 the DHS developed a proposal to limit the number of children who could be placed in foster care. This proposal was designed to contain the increases in expenditures and also to encourage the development of services designed to preserve families and avoid out-of-home placements where appropriate.

In 1992 the General Assembly approved a cap of 1,405 children who could be placed in group foster care for FY 1993. The cap was set at 1,350 for FY 1994. Preliminary figures

indicate the average number of children in group foster care in FY 1993 was 1,312, or 93 children (6.6%) less than the cap.

A Juvenile Justice System Study Committee was established in the 1992 interim, and was carried over into the 1993 interim. The charge of this Committee was as follows:

"Work in conjunction with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to conduct a comprehensive study concerning the delivery of services to juveniles involved in delinquency and Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) proceedings. Include an examination of the types of placements available for juveniles in the system, the system's effectiveness in meeting these juveniles' needs and reducing recidivism, and its cost-effectiveness. Analyze Iowa's current juvenile justice laws and make recommendations on any changes needed to combat delinquency and crime. Review steps

taken by other states and communities to combat gangs and juvenile crimes and other steps taken to improve their juvenile justice systems. Make recommendations for short-term and long-term changes to Iowa's juvenile justice system to make it more efficient and cost-effective."

The Study Committee contracted with Consultant Paul DeMuro to help assess the effectiveness of residential placements for juveniles involved in delinquency or CINA proceedings. The \$30,000 cost of this evaluation was financed equally by the Annie E. Casey Foundation resources and State funding.

Responsibility for ongoing juvenile justice planning is divided between 2 councils. The 1993 Update to the Iowa Juvenile Justice Plan represents a consensus reached by over 40 members of both Councils regarding priority juvenile justice issues.

CURRENT SITUATION

The report submitted by Mr. DeMuro contains 7 major recommendations:

- The State needs to develop an inclusive planning process, including parents, advocates, and private agencies. This process should result in a time-lined plan that clearly sets out specific goals and objectives regarding services for CINA and delinquent youth.
- Iowa should develop a regionalized, diverse, comprehensive service delivery system, aligned with the 8 judicial districts. Each of the 8 regions should be held responsible for developing a continuum of services. As new regional services are implemented, the State Training School at Eldora would be downsized and the Juvenile Home at Toledo would be closed or substantially reconfigured.
- Private agencies with larger campus-type programs should serve youth from a specific geographic area, concentrate on diversifying their programs, and concentrate on developing aftercare and non-residential supports.
- Psychiatric Medical Institutions for Children (PMIC) beds are a part of the service delivery system and should be included under the cap. PMICs should develop appropriate regional programs for emotionally disturbed CINA youth who are presently placed at Toledo and should develop small, non-institutional, more normalized programs (such as intensive family supports and therapeutic foster homes) for youth 12 and under who are currently placed in PMIC beds.
- Iowa should develop and implement a comprehensive case management system which assures that youth are appropriately referred to residential care and remain in care for the

shortest amount of time as necessary, consistent with public safety. Youth should receive services while in residential care that concretely address their specific needs with appropriate re-entry and aftercare supports.

- The State needs to develop the capacity for an improved information system which can help monitor the system and provide data necessary to the development of performance standards. The State also needs to provide enhanced training to private and public agency staff and develop a more detailed quality assurance/monitoring program.
- The DHS needs to investigate the causes for the increase in the rate of placement of youth into private psychiatric hospitals. Strong gatekeeping procedures need to be implemented since these placements are 70.0% Medicaid funded.

The 1993 Update to the Iowa Juvenile Justice Plan contains "recommended actions" addressing 6 issues:

- Prevention
- Array of services for system-involved youth and their families
- Training
- Minority over-representation
- Gangs
- Secure facilities and alternatives

Copies of the 1993 Update have previously been distributed to members of the General Assembly. The "recommended actions" are available upon request from the Legislative Fiscal Bureau.

ALTERNATIVES

The Study Committee has received authorization to meet for 2 additional days, and the agenda is expected to include discussion of Mr. DeMuro's report and recommendations.

Several of the recommendations have been discussed by previous General Assemblies.

- The importance of an inclusive planning process led to the creation of the Child Welfare Task Force, which is still in existence.
- Proposals to downsize the State Training School and close the State Juvenile Home have been considered during development of the Human Services Budget but have not received approval. In 1993, the General Assembly approved population guidelines which limited the types of juveniles placed at the 2 facilities.
- Development of a comprehensive case management system would likely require a substantial increase in the number of social work staff, and would therefore be expensive. Current caseloads are too high to permit social workers to provide effective case management.
- The need for an improved information system is reflected in the ongoing development by DHS of the Family and Childrens Services (FACS) System. The DHS is expected to spend approximately \$630,000 in FY 1994 for this project.

BUDGET IMPACT

The funding for juvenile justice is split among a variety of appropriations. The largest FY 1993 estimated expenditures are for foster care (\$47.5 million), Judicial Operations (\$81.0 million), and legal representation for children involved in court proceedings (\$3.2 million).

Out-of-home placements for children are expensive. Group foster care costs in FY 1994 are capped at \$76.61 per day, which is \$27,500 annually. Per diem costs at the State Training School and State Juvenile Home are \$122.00 and \$128.00, respectively.

It appears the recommendations made by Mr. DeMuro could have a significant impact upon expenditures within the Juvenile Justice system. His recommendations for expanded databases and enhanced training would involve short term costs but have the potential to reduce costs in the long term.

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